

Abstract

5 A method and apparatus for transmitting a burst of data over a supplemental channel on just one leg of a handoff by changing at least one of the parameters of the data to be transmitted over the supplemental channel as a function of the future and/or current characteristics of the communication link of the leg(s) of the handoff. This controlled parameters of the data can include the maximum allowed burst duration, and the type and/or amount of error coding of the data. The data is then transmitted over just one leg of handoff using the parameter. By changing the parameters of the data, the data may still be acceptably received at the mobile terminal over just one leg of the soft handoff even when the strength of the pilot signal used for the supplemental channel changes significantly. The invention thus, advantageously, delays or possibly obviates the need to establish a supplemental channel over additional legs of the soft handoff. This reduces the number of resources needed for the call, and therefore increases the capacity of the wireless communication system. In an illustrative embodiment of the invention the stability of the communication link is used as a way of ascertaining the future conditions of the communications link. A number of factors such as whether the call is in soft handoff, and/or the measurements of the pilot signal(s), and/or the measurements of the signal(s) on the supplemental channel can be used in assessing the stability of the communication link.

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